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How to Sabotage a Pipeline

confessions of two #NoDAPL accomplices



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What follows is the joint statement of Ruby Montoya & Jessica Reznicek, both of whom have been presented with charges in regards to multiple acts of sabotage against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

This is our statement, we will be representing ourselves...

The Dakota Access Pipeline is an issue that affects this entire nation and the people that are subject to its rule. With DAPL we have seen incredible issues regarding the rule of law, indigenous sovereignty, land seizures, state sanctioned brutality, as well as corporate protections and pardons for their wrongdoings. To all those that continue to be subjected to the government's injustices, we humbly stand with you, and we ask now that you stand with us.

Federal courts gave corporations permission to lie and withhold information from the public resulting in a complete media blackout. So, after recently being called by the Intercept, an independent media outlet, regarding illegal surveillance by the Dakota Access Pipeline and

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their goons, we viewed this as an opportunity to encourage public discourse surrounding nonviolent direct action as well as exposing the inadequacies of the government and the corporations they protect.

After having explored and exhausted all avenues of process, including attending public commentary hearings, gathering signatures for valid requests for Environmental Impact Statements, participating in Civil Disobedience, hunger strikes, marches and rallies, boycotts and encampments, we saw the clear deficiencies of our government to hear the people's demands.

Instead, the courts and public officials allowed these corporations to steal permissions from landowners and brutalize the land, water, and people. Our conclusion is that the system is broken and it is up to us as individuals to take peaceful action and remedy it, and this we did, out of necessity.

We acted for our children and the world that they are inheriting is unfit. There are over five major bodies of water here in Iowa, and none of them are clean because of corporation's flagrant

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irresponsibility, and now another wishes to poison literally millions of us irreparably by putting us all at risk of another major catastrophe with yet another oil spill. DAPL has already leaked, and it will continue do so until the oil is shut off and the pipes are removed from the ground.

On election night 2016, we began our peaceful direct action campaign to a Dakota Access construction site and burned at least 5 pieces of heavy machinery in Buena Vista County, IA. Details regarding this action are attached to this statement below. This was information which was not shared with the public. We recognize that our action wasn't much, but we at least stopped construction for a day at that particular site.

We then began to research the tools necessary to pierce through 5/8 inch steel pipe, the material used for this pipeline. In March we began to apply this self-gathered information. We began in Mahaska County, IA, using oxy-acetylene cutting torches to pierce through exposed, empty steel valves, successfully delaying completion of the pipeline for weeks. After the success of this peaceful action, we began to use

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this tactic up and down the pipeline, throughout Iowa (and a part of South Dakota), moving from valve to valve until running out of supplies, and continuing to stop the completion of this project. More information on these actions is followed at the end of this statement.

These actions of great public interest were hardly reported and the federal government and Energy Transfer Partners colluded together to lie and withhold vital information to the public.

We then returned to arsonry as a tactic. Using tires and gasoline-soaked rags we burned multiple valve sites, their electrical units, as well as additional heavy equipment located on DAPL easements throughout Iowa, further halting construction.

Later, in the first week of May we attempted yet again to pierce a valve located in Wapallo County, IA with an oxy-acetylene cutting torch. It was at this time we discovered oil was flowing through the pipe. This was beyond disheartening to us, as well as to the nation at large. This event was again hidden from the public and replaced with lies about “ditch depressions”.

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O: Is there anything else you'd like people to know?

R: We did this out of necessity and a true calling from our hearts and we are in a dire situation with this climate spinning into chaos because of these corporations and the federal government that allows them to lead us further into the unknown as far as climate change in concerned. Anyone that's aware of this needs to be doing—I feel—everything that they can to prevent this downturn that we're in as far as polluting our home.

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I feel that it's a process that really is empowering for us as defendants, and as great as Robert Sigler and Bill Quigley are as individuals—I admire them greatly—they really can't express adequately our reasons and our focus on these issues regarding the DAPL project because they aren't us and we were acting from our hearts and our spirits the entire time and ultimately that's how we're going to have to represent ourselves to a jury of our peers. I don't have faith in this court system or legal system, but I do still maintain faith in the people. And I'm an Iowan, born and raised here, and I really have faith in Iowans, and Iowa in general. The people of Iowa said no repeatedly to this pipeline. I really, really hope that we get a jury that adequately represents the desires of the local people.

O: I hope so too! Do y'all have needs that still need to be met?

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We stand here now today as witnesses of peaceful, nonviolent direct action. Our actions have been those of necessity and humility. We feel we have done nothing to be ashamed of. For some reason the courts and ruling government value corporate property and profit over our inherent human rights to clean water and land.

We are speaking publicly to empower others to act boldly, with purity of heart, to dismantle the infrastructures which deny us our rights to water, land and liberty. We as civilians have seen the repeated failures of the government and it is our duty to act with responsibility and integrity, risking our own liberty for the sovereignty of us all.

Some may view these actions as violent, but be not mistaken. We acted from our hearts and never threatened human life nor personal property. What we did do was fight a private corporation that has run rampantly across our country seizing land and polluting our nation's water supply. You may not agree with our tactics, but you can clearly see the necessity of them in light of the broken federal government and the

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corporations they protect.

We do not anticipate a fair trial but do expect our loved ones to undergo harassment from the federal government and the corporations they protect. We urge you to not speak one word to the federal government and stand firm in order to not be oppressed further into making false, but self-incriminating statements. Film these interactions. There are resources as what to do if the federal agents appear at your doorstep, educate and protect yourself.

It is unfortunate to have to prepare for such things, but this is the government that rules, which continues to look more and more like a Nazi, fascist Germany as each day passes. We salute the people.

Details of our peaceful direct action are as follows. We hope this information helps inspire others to act boldly and peacefully, and to ease any anxieties to perceptions held that the state and these corporations are somehow an “omniscient” and “undefeatable” entity.

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R: I feel that the response has been overwhelmingly positive and also I feel that many people were very surprised, but very proud about what we’ve done. I hope in the future that more peaceful direct action is taken in this manner for those that feel the call to act with integrity, and I hope that no one else has to come forward to do these things.

O: What I gathered from y’all’s statement and what I heard reported, you all plan on defending yourselves in court. Is this true? And, what do you think that’s going to look like?

J: Yeah, Ruby and I are acting pro se. We have a fantastic federal attorney, Mr. Bill Quigley of Loyola Law School serving as our stand-by council and we hope to garner further legal support as stand by. I represented myself in the last trial I had, two years ago in Omaha, working with Bill Quigley as my stand-by council and also Robert Sigler as a local stand-by council out of Sarpy County, Omaha.

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O: Fuck yeah! Do you think there's a reason that you're not in jail right now?

R: Yeah, I think it is because we came out of left field, from another dimension or something and they don't know how to handle this stuff. The Feds seem to have this idea of how things work in their world, with this patriarchal, hierarchical system where someone gives someone else orders and then someone else ends up doing things and that's just not the way that this (us) works.

This is how we do resistance: with trust, solidarity, and integrity. I feel personally that you can have people that you admire and who inspire you, but you ultimately need to be your own leader and have self-responsibility and act upon that, and that's what we did and we definitely threw them for a loop and they're probably having meetings right now, deciding how to handle this politically.

O: I would love to be a fly on the wall at these meetings. How has the movement responded thus far to your decision to go public? How do

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On election night, knowing that gasoline burns quickly, but does not sustain by itself, we added motor oil (which burns at a higher temperature and for longer) and rags to coffee canisters and placed them on the seats of the machinery, piercing the coffee canisters once they were in place and striking several matches, anticipating that the seats would burn and maintain a fire long enough to make the machines obsolete. One canister did not light, and that is unfortunate, but five out of six ain't bad.

As we saw construction continue, we realized that pipe was going into the ground and that our only means to obstruct further corporate desecration was somehow to pierce through the empty steel pipes exposed at the numerous

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valve sites. We learned that a welding torch using oxygen and acetylene was the proper tool. We bought the equipment outside of our city in efforts to maintain anonymity as our goal was to push this corporation beyond their means to eventually abandon the project. We bought kits at Home Depot and the tanks at welding supply stores, like Praxair and Mathesons. Having no experience with welding equipment before, we learned through our own volition and we were able to get the job down to 7 minutes.

In our particular circumstances, we learned that scouting often hindered our ability to act in windows of opportunity. So, we went with our torches and protective gear on, and found numerous sites, feeling out the “vibe” of each situation, and deciding to act then and there, often in broad daylight. Trust your spirit, trust the signs.

Having run out of supplies (the tanks) we decided to return to arsonry because every action counts. We used gasoline and rags along with tires (as tires burn a nice while, once a steady fire within them burns) to multiple DAPL sites and

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O: By now, thousands (if not more) of folks have seen the video of y’all getting arrested. Is there anything that happened while in custody that you’d like to discuss?

R: While we were incarcerated we were taken into separate interrogation rooms where the FBI from Omaha tried to question us and we both declined speaking with them because we have no interest in speaking with the feds.

J: We had in our statement that we also encourage friends, family, and the community—and a broader community, the activist community in general—to never comply with the state. The best thing we can do in these situations to protect ourselves and our comrades is stay silent.

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Jessica: I would say that I absolutely have been; I've been a part of the Des Moines Catholic Worker movement here for six years and have participated in civil disobedience and my own kind of variation of Plowshares in Omaha, two years ago, at US Defense contractor Northrop Grumman. I stood there and accepted responsibility for my action at that time, also out of necessity. And coming from this position where I really want to, at this point especially, with the pipeline, share publicly the situation that we're in, and to do so I must claim responsibility for what I've done; especially when I know in my heart that it was the right thing to do and that I'm following my spirit every step of the way. And we've had—already, in the recent few days—just an influx of media organizations calling us.

Taking responsibility really humanized this action, especially for folks who have known me and worked with me here in Iowa in various activist organizations in the past six years to realize that their friend, their colleague, their comrade is really somebody who would take actions like this. I think that definitely I'm inspired

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It is because of these lies we choose to come out publicly, to set the record straight, and be open about these peaceful and viable tactics against corporate atrocities.

If there are any regrets, it is that we did not act enough.

Please support and stand with us in this journey because we all need this pipeline stopped.

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On July 24, Ruby Montoya and Jessica Reznicek held a press conference in which they read a prepared statement while standing in front of the Iowa Utility Board (IUB). In the statement, Ruby and Jessica confessed to arson and other acts of sabotage along the Dakota Access pipeline, describing what they did in detail and stating their reasons (expanded upon below). They then took a crowbar and hammer and began pulling off the letters of the IUB sign before being arrested. They were released from jail the next day and charged with fourth degree criminal mischief. The day after that, they were interviewed by Earth First!...

Onion: What was the thought process and the goals of choosing to write a statement admitting guilt instead of releasing an anonymous communiqué about your actions?

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O: Quite a few movements and groups throughout history have used the tactic of taking responsibility for their acts of resistance, even if that means prison time. Were you inspired by any of these movements or groups?

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